

THE ROLE OF FAMILY FARMS TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

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Abstract

This paper aims to bring more knowledge regarding the concept of food security and to identify the role of family farms in this process. In this sense, will be made documentary studies based on the national and international specialized literature and will be processed data provided by competent international organizations (FAO, EUROSTAT etc.). Food security requires, first, obtaining food products, sufficient like volume, structure and quality, to meet the needs for food of the population throughout the year. United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture was estimated that food production will be increased in 2050 by 60%. Under present conditions, much of this growth should come from the family farms in developing countries.

Key words: family farms, food security, food products

INTRODUCTION

Food security involves primarily: production of food products, sufficient like volume, structure and quality, to meet the needs for food of the population throughout the year, thus ensuring to obtain high quality products; accessibility of the necessary food for the entire population, including the disadvantaged; combining the criteria of equity, with economic efficiency in the production and distribution of food, tending continuously to raise efficiency; obtaining food products with complex nutritional quality, clean and aligned to international standards. [3]

Currently, worldwide there are over 500 million *family farms*, which are the predominant *model in agriculture* and the leading provider of food both in developed countries and the developing ones. [5]

Year 2014 was declared International Year of the Family Farm, which is why the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture has facilitated the implementation of cooperation programs on this issue with country Governments, International Development Agencies, farmers' organizations and other relevant organizations of United Nations and with non-governmental

organizations (NGOs). According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania "applying fair agricultural, environmental and social policy, family farms can contribute to the eradication of hunger and poverty while protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development." [2]

Rural world is a reality extremely vast and complex, while being tackled in various aspects of numerous research institutions and numerous researchers. The terminology used to describe the rural area is extremely rich and *sustainable rural development* remains a challenge and a priority objective of national and European. In developed countries, economic development strategies in rural areas aimed at reshaping the rural economies in the context of farm restructuring and economic and social changes associated with it. *The rural economy in Romania* is still poorly diversified and depends to a very large extent on agriculture, dominated by subsistence and semi-subsistence farms. [4]

Romania's agrarian structures are highly polarized. Thus: 40% of usable agricultural area (SAU) of Romania is 2.5 to 2,800,000 small and very small farms (below 5 ha); 40% of the country, i.e. from 3.8 to 4.0 million ha is owned by about 800 large farms (with area

of 1,000 ha each); 20% of Romania's SAU is in farms with surface comparable to the European Union (5-50 ha). [9]

The concept of the family farm is associated with family values such as solidarity, continuity and commitment. In terms of economic, family farm is identifying with specific business skills, management, risk assessment, endurance and professional fulfillment. Family farms offers more than just a professional occupation, which reflect the lifestyle of many Romanians and Europeans. [6]

Family farms can play an important role in the safety and food security by increasing food availability in poor countries, preservation of traditional products, ensuring the transition to a more healthful diet etc. [10]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data on which are collected and processed in this work come from the international literature and the official websites of international institutions empowered (FAO, EUROSTAT etc.). As *research methods* were used bibliographic synthesis (basic research), statistical methods for quantitative analysis and qualitative methods for evaluation indicators.

The research had two main components, namely: a documentary component, which took into account: reviewing the definitions and concepts; presentation of current issues of worldwide interest on food security; study on food security indicators; a qualitative component, which includes a series of results and discussion on the role of family farms in ensuring food security and global problem of population growth and its effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the FAO, 80% of *agricultural land* is owned by small farmers (each working up to 10 hectares). While 75% of the food we consume is generated by 12 plants and five animal species, *family farms* preserves species resistant to climate change. [5]

Food needs satisfaction of the population

depends not only on the existence of food availability, but also the solvent demand of the population, and therefore the size of the raw product supply cost level.

Currently food costs, in many countries, including Romania, exceed 50% of the income of the population. Such a situation constitutes a brake on the development of the internal market and a main barrier to economic growth. [4]

Making the perspective of **food consumption pattern** of optional generalized satiety form may occur both by increasing revenues and reducing in real terms food prices so that the share of the population spending money for food consumption in total expenditure consumption to decrease in comparable terms from over 50% to about 15-20%, as is the European Union. [8]

Worldwide, **global food security** is measured by two *fundamental indicators*, namely: production of wheat and corn stocks. Wheat is the most effective parameter because for half of the energy needs of a man and is less perishable like fruits and vegetables can be stored long term. *Wheat production per capita* is calculated and shows how much wheat a person should consume, and inventories show that consumption exceeds production, or vice versa. [3]

Every day the world's population grows by about 220,000 people, and every year the world population added 80 million people. All these people must have access to sufficient food and safe food. The increase comes mainly from developing countries that, overall, nearly double their population by 2050 from 0.9 billion today to 1.7 billion. Overall, 2050 will be over 9 billion. The question is: will manage the earth to feed us all safe food in sufficient quantities? [3]

Agricultural policies whose general objectives were originally meant to food security from own production, and subsequently with the CAP reform, the objectives were to increase the quality of their products and their competitiveness in the internal market and external environment, protecting the interests consumers, sustainable agricultural development, have been and are

EU policy priority. Besides social issues aimed consumer protection, safety and security food etc., the importance of agriculture to European Union countries and the resulting economic aspects.

The EU, in 2007, agriculture occupies in achieving GDP share from 0.5% in Luxembourg and 6.1% in Greece and Lithuania, and food, beverages and cigarettes from 0.9% in Luxembourg and 4.0% in Lithuania. These contributions with low level, is not negligible considering the value of GDP in the EU-27. [8]

The main bodies involved in the monitoring of global food security are: FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture); EC - European Commission; USDA - United States Department of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture of the United Nations).

According to data published by these international institutions in recent years, states that there are problems of food insecurity in 86 countries, 43 in Africa, 24 in Asia, 9 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 7 in Oceania and 3 in Europe. In 2004, 35 countries have received emergency aid due to food crises. The main causes were: civil and military conflict, post-conflict situations, refugees, economic disadvantaged areas and climate issues. [11]

In 2001, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, states that: "Extreme poverty, growing inequality between countries and within the country, are the major problems of contemporary, because they are due to instability and conflict. Reducing global poverty is therefore a prerequisite for safeguarding peace and security". For example, rapid population growth and the gradual reduction of agricultural use exacerbates poverty rates in rural areas. City dwellers and poor villagers enjoy very limited access to information and services that enable them to space births and limit the tasks according to their preferences. Also increasingly difficult living conditions compromise the formation of income in rural areas and contribute to worsening health conditions, determine migration rural - urban

and peri-urban newcomers installing the already fragile environment. [8]

The number of food emergencies has increased over the past two decades from an average of 15% per year in the 1980s to more than 30% per year after 2001. Most of these increases occurred in Africa, where the average number of food crises almost annually tripled. Balance causes food crises has shifted over time. Since 1992, the proportion of seizures that were attributed mainly human causes such as conflict or economic crises doubled increasing from 15% to less than 35%. More than 45 million people have been affected by the humanitarian crisis of 2003. Most of these crises persisted long, often being triggered by military conflict and drought, floods and the effects of AIDS. [5]

In Europe, Regulation no. 1292-1296 adopted by the EU Council on 27 June. 1996 defines food aid program and food security of the European Commission. It resulted from a food aid policy reform progress established since 1994 in order to make food aid an integrated effectively as possible in policy development and food security strategy of the countries concerned with this problem. Nature of food aid (with direct reference to the reserves of agricultural products) is made in accordance with Article 11 of the said Regulation. Reducing the vulnerability of the helpless population of food aid system results in better identification of their needs for a better appreciation of the strategy by which they implement to nutrition risk factors. Representation of Regulation 1992/96 is also found in the International Food Aid Convention, negotiated in 1999. Annual Convention sets minimum understanding about food aid (Argentina, Australia, Canada, the European Commission and members, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, U.S.A.). [8]

As can be appreciated from all the issues set out above, **food security** is influenced by four major groups of factors, namely: social economic and political environment; performance of the agrifood sector; social protection; health and hygiene. In this context, *the role of family farms* to ensure the extra production to ensure national security

imperative regionally, nationally and internationally, is undeniable. Although there is no universally accepted definition of the *family farm*, the farm is small (generally with an area of between 10 - 100 hectares) the workforce is represented mainly by the owner family and the output designed for both personal consumption and marketing. [7]

In Romania recorded the APJA (Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture) 60,000 family farms, which represent less than 5% of the farms, which also include subsistence and semi-subsistence farms and commercial farms, given that this institution farms account for less than 1 ha. [1]

The most common operational model of agriculture in the European Union is represented by family farms. Most of the 12 million European farms are set up as family farms, transmitted from one generation to another, there by contributing to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas. This type of farms contribute to ensuring food security, increasing the level of food safety, quality, value, origin and diversity of food. [6] **Family farms** have significant production potential, but their development capacities are reduced, given that low investment potential, are poorly mechanized and can not compete large farms (commercial). In this context, specialists dialogues with farmers revealed that their needs are the same anywhere in the world. These include, firstly, technical assistance, financial assistance, a special focus on women farmers and increase youth participation in the activity of these farms. Women represent 43% of the labor force in agriculture in developed countries and 50% in East Asia and South-East and some parts of Africa. [11]

At European level, and not only, were directed large sums of money for the establishment or development of family farms. Number of businesses in agriculture was one of the best developments in the European Union, being funded projects in the plant, horticulture and livestock. For the programming period 2014 - 2020, funds from National Agencies for Budgets and the

EU budget for agriculture has been reduced, but are still at a very high level. [10]

The table below shows *the distribution of the share of family farms* internationally in 2010, having as parameter for assessing the area owned and / or operated. (Table 1)

Table 1. Number and percentage of family farms in total agricultural holdings

Countries	Total number of agricultural holdings	Number of family farms (10-100 ha)	The percent age of family farms
Belgium	42,850	25,750	60.09
Bulgaria	370,490	15,760	4.25
Czech Republic	22,860	10,740	46.98
Denmark	42,100	22,920	54.44
Germany	299,130	190,850	63.80
Estonia	19,610	7,210	36.76
Ireland	139,890	109,700	78.41
Greece	723,060	76,580	10.59
Spain	989,800	271,170	27.39
France	516,100	236,450	45.81
Croatia	233,280	23,970	10.27
Italy	1,620,880	236,940	14.61
Cyprus	38,860	1,890	4.86
Latvia	83,390	29,850	35.79
Lithuania	199,910	38,810	19.41
Luxembourg	2,200	1,170	53.18
Hungary	576,810	41,230	7.14
Malta	12,530	50	0.39
Netherlands	72,320	39,170	54.16
Austria	150,170	73,280	48.79
Poland	1,506,620	330,630	21.94
Portugal	305,270	35,080	11.49
Romania	3,859,040	69,030	1.79
Slovenia	74,650	11,720	15.69
Slovakia	24,460	3,840	15.69
Finland	63,870	45,910	71.88
Sweden	71,090	38,420	54.04
U. K.	186,800	104,060	55.70
Iceland	2,590	390	15.05
Norway	46,620	31,760	68.12
Switzerland	59,070	39,560	66.97
Montenegro	48,870	2,240	4.58

Source: Statistical Office of the European Union, Eurostat, www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat.

In order to ensure food safety is necessary transformation of family farms in some modern and competitive farms, especially in developing countries. Dialogues with farmers revealed that their needs are identical worldwide. These include technical assistance, special attention to female farmers and increasing youth participation in the work of these farms.

CONCLUSIONS

Multidimensional nature of *food security*, just as the fight against poverty, requires a good correlation between the various economy sectors - agriculture, trade, infrastructure, health - and the variety of intervention levels - local, national and international levels.

Food safety and security policy in the EU is considering the whole chain of food for consumption by animals or humans. It provides extensive regulations and emphasizes the responsibility of manufacturers and suppliers in terms of their participation in providing quality food supply. According to FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization - United Nations Food and Agriculture), **food security** is "guaranteeing each individual permanently in any place or time of access to sufficient and healthy food to allow him to have a system sufficient food for a healthy and active life".

Human rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible. *The right to be free from hunger and discrimination is a fundamental right to life and security of person.* While violent conflicts surely result from a combination of several factors, poverty creates conditions for the emergence or maintenance of a conflict. Investing in development is of particular importance in reduced probability of war, and development strategies should take into account the possible effects on reducing the risk of conflict (or its extension accidental).

Reported seizures disrupt food production and food security undermines chasing people from their homes, kicking eroding the foundation of everyday life and social status of families, communities and countries. However,

frequently, farmers and communities resignations show remarkable disasters.

Currently, *CAP objectives* include helping agriculture to achieve its multifunctional role in society: producing safe and healthy food, contribute to rural development and environmental protection and enhancing status and its biodiversity cultivated. Also, it was important for the EU to establish common rules for the approval of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture.

EU tries to help the environment by: providing financial assistance to encourage change; for example, reducing the number of animals per hectare of land, leaving fallow field borders, creating ponds and planting hedges, thus bypassing traditional methods of agriculture; amortization support for preservation of nature; insisting that farmers observe the laws related to the environment (and on the health of consumers, animals and plants) and watchfulness on the correct operation of the land if they wish to qualify for direct subsidies.

At this point, it may be noted, however, that *food policy* is not only an issue of agriculture and food industry, but the entire national economy. Overcoming the current situation depends on both, the macroeconomic policy and sectoral developments GDP between national and sectoral labor productivity, revenue and prices, generating solvent demand increased, widening the internal market and economic spillover effects.

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